Sexuality & Culture
DOI 10.1007/s12119-016-9348-z

REVIEW

Voluntary Agencies' Responses to, and Attitudes toward Male Rape: Issues and Concerns

Aliraza Javaid[1]

Abstract This paper critically explores voluntary agencies' responses to, and attitudes toward male survivors of rape in England and Wales. There has been a gap in this area, so this paper attempts to fill this gap in knowledge by examining how these survivors experience service delivery and by examining what contributions feminist theory and research has made to understand 'male rape'. This paper argues that feminist theory and research neglects male rape and this negligence can also be seen in voluntary organisations for survivors. Therefore, through the neglect of male rape, the gender roles of men and women are reinforced instead of being tackled. This paper contributes to knowledge by opening up a discussion on male rape in the academic setting, in feminist theory and research debates, and in research surrounding voluntary agencies. This, in turn, helps to raise awareness of such a 'hidden' phenomenon in policy and practice and helps to form a better understanding not only of male rape, but also of the responses and attitudes toward it by voluntary provisions and the wider society.

Keywords Feminism · Voluntary agencies · Male rape · Neglect · Gender

Introduction

According to recent figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales in 2013, approximately 75,000 men are victims of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault a year, while 9000 men are victims of rape or attempted rape each year (Ministry of Justice 2014a). Similarly, 72,000 males per year are estimated to become victims of sexual offences, whether reported or not (Ministry of Justice 2014b). This article

✉ Aliraza Javaid
ali_2p9@hotmail.co.uk

[1] Leeds Beckett University, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 3HE, UK

Published online: 25 March 2016

will examine voluntary agencies' attitudes and responses to male survivors of rape due to the increasing occurrence of male rape in current British society (Abdullah-Khan 2008). For this paper, the working definition of 'male rape' is men raping other men; the statistics above define 'male rape' in the same way as this paper does. The statistics on rape exclude women who rape men because, in current English law, only men can legally rape, not women. This paper, however, will include discussion and research evidence relating to women who rape men. For the purposes of this article, this paper will use 'voluntary agencies' to indicate that these are organisations that serve male rape survivors in England and Wales, and that these are victim services in general. For example, 'Victim Support', 'SurvivorsUK', 'ManKind' and some rape crisis centers are voluntary organisations that male rape survivors go to for help and assistance. These voluntary agencies are in contrast to those provisions located in or are together with criminal justice agencies. The rationale for researching voluntary agencies for male rape within the British context is because they are the first port of call for male rape survivors when rape is reported (Jamel 2010).

This paper will also explore socialist and radical feminism; radical feminism will be considered more closely, given that this strand of feminism has dominated most research on rape. The limitations of feminist theory in terms of its ability to explain male rape will also be examined. Critically evaluating feminist research is important because many voluntary agencies employ feminists, while many voluntary agencies are feminist based, such as rape crisis centers (Cohen 2014). This paper will demonstrate how principles of feminist theory and research can be extended to provide a plausible explanation and understanding of male rape. This paper is not an attempt to detract focus from female rape or sexual violence against women, as we know that violence against women is still a major issue (Javaid 2015a). Arguably, the phenomenon of sexual violence is rooted in the socially and culturally constructed expectations, beliefs and practices of men and women. This paper will argue that, through the neglect of male rape, the gender roles of men and women are reinforced instead of being tackled.

This paper is a critical engagement with the literature surrounding voluntary agencies and male rape and also explores the different male rape myths and stereotypes present in societies and in voluntary agencies that provide support for survivors, with a view to suggest how further research can help understand male rape. However, whilst there is a steady increase in academic interest regarding male rape in the USA, the male rape research from the United Kingdom is limited; so in this paper, there will be some research emanating from the USA. Research works that are examining male rape within the United Kingdom have adopted small-scale samples due to the lack of reported cases and have mostly been clinically based. Nevertheless, this research attempts to contribute to existing knowledge surrounding male rape to give an understanding of such a phenomenon and how voluntary agencies may serve male survivors of rape in current British society.

The rest of the paper will be broken down into five parts. Firstly, 'voluntary sector and male rape' will critically explore the third sector and the ways in which it serves (or neglects) male rape victims. Secondly, "the 'ideal' victim" section examines the argument that male rape victims may not be seen as 'ideal' victims,

which in turn may shape the type of service delivery these victims obtain, the attitudes from wider society including voluntary agency workers, and the perpetuation of male rape myths. Thirdly, I critically examine feminisms, such as radical and socialist feminisms, while also interlinking this examination to feminist-based rape crisis centres that reach out to male rape survivors. Fourthly, the positive contribution of radical feminism is discussed in relation to its robust explanation of rape; the offender rapes their victim to perform power and control. Finally, the conclusion will sum up the main arguments of the paper.

Voluntary Sector and Male Rape

Voluntary agencies play an important role in producing, interpreting, and implementing policy, while having a vital duty to raise awareness, lobby for change, and deliver particular provisions. However, voluntary agencies for male rape survivors are limited. The lack of research and attention on male rape may make getting resources difficult. It is important to shed some light on the literature surrounding voluntary agencies for male rape survivors, then, so as to give an understanding of voluntary agencies' responses to, and attitudes toward male rape.

The emergence of the very first voluntary agency service provision to provide services for male rape survivors and male survivors of sexual violence is 'SurvivorsUK' (opened in the late 1980s), echoing feminism and rape crisis, which was the outcome of gay rights activism (Mezey and King 2000). The 'SurvivorsUK' organisation rapidly adapted to involve all types of male survivors, regardless of their sexual orientation, in direct response to demand. This is because most of the feminist-based rape crisis (the biggest within the United Kingdom while having international recognition) centers do not reach out to male survivors. This is still the issue to date, which is extremely problematic because, as a result of the negligence, they are still disregarding, segregating, and isolating male rape survivors (Cohen 2014). Indeed, most of the feminist-based rape crisis centres have no systematic provision for male survivors—even though the Ministry of Justice provides public funding so that such centres can give support to *all* survivors of sexual violence—suggesting that provision for men is not the norm.[1]

The gender expectations of men in societies, which emphasise self-reliance, force several male rape survivors to manage the after effects of male rape themselves (Carpenter 2009). As a result, the male rape survivors are reluctant to seek help from voluntary agencies, establish a way to recover, and take full advantage of what help is accessible (Rentoul and Appleboom 1997). However, Carpenter (2009), a male rape counsellor, predicates that a number of male rape survivors will eventually find a place and time in which they will expose their traumatic experience, though this is usually a long time after the rape has occurred. This highlights the importance of the need of voluntary agencies to be aware of the many issues associated with male

[1] If rape crisis centres are given more power without any responsibility on them to attain equality in service provision, it can have serious consequences for male rape survivors.

rape, which only then can they adequately provide services for male rape survivors. However, the following raises a concern:

> The lack of social awareness of the psychological problems facing male victims of sexual assault, the paucity of empirical research and the lack of information available to the police and healthcare workers all serve to underscore the need for a review of the published literature in this field (Rentoul and Appleboom 1997: 268).

This scarcity described here has resulted in an absence of a specific type of intervention specifically for male rape survivors. For example, Vearnals and Campbell (2001) argue that voluntary agencies deliver intervention that is frequently based on either literature surrounding childhood sexual abuse or female rape, or clinical experience. Therefore, therapeutic intervention is not designed to tackle male rape survivors' issues and concerns and is found to be insensitive to the survivors' unique experiences (Washington 1999). Older research stresses the risk of employing intervention that has either female or children survivors in mind for male rape survivors because such intervention tends to emphasise to survivors that they were powerless within the violent incident (Sepler 1990). Connell (2005) discusses that males are socialised to be powerful and independent, arguing that both powerlessness and helplessness are not an option for males because they prevent men from achieving hegemonic masculinity. That is, the dominant form of masculinity in the gender hierarchy, which all men are expected to achieve, but, men failing to achieve this social ideal of masculinity and the gender expectations of men, they may get classified as not 'real men'. Voluntary agencies adopting such intervention that expresses powerlessness and helplessness may be harmful to male rape survivors.

For those survivors who do try to get help, they may not be able to get it. For example, research has documented that voluntary agencies, designed to help female rape survivors, are frequently reticent to provide help or to listen to male rape survivors because of a scarcity of awareness and training on the issues surrounding male rape (Carpenter 2009). King (1995) suggests that voluntary agencies are needed in order to provide male rape survivors with counselling support, as most will benefit from it. The survivors may require counselling relating to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, as anxiety and fear surrounding the contraction of HIV/AIDS is an issue for male rape survivors (Davies 2002). When counselling is provided, there remains the issue of the gender identity of the service provider. For example, on the one hand, a number of authors suggest that homosexual and heterosexual male rape survivors would have a preference of a female counsellor to prevent the danger of eroticised transference, mistrust of men, and the loss of control within therapy (Carpenter 2009). On the other hand, there is a scarcity of evidence to back up this argument and a male counsellor may, instead, actually assist to resurrect trust in men (King 1995). In addition, other treatment strategies are used to assist male rape survivors in terms of recovering; for example, hypnotherapy, crisis therapy, cognitive therapy, and psychodynamic therapies (Koss and Harvey 1987).

Recent research has found that males who suffered penetration throughout their attack were more unlikely than other types of survivors to look for assistance from voluntary agencies, suggesting that such males were potentially suffering from confusion and shame pertaining to their sexual identification (Monk-Turner and Light 2010). When the survivors seek help, as Donnelly and Kenyon (1996) argue, they are met with professionals, working in voluntary agencies, who possess male rape myths: if they were raped, it was because they 'wanted to be'; and 'men cannot be raped', leaving the authors to conclude that many professionals who work in voluntary organisations do not consider male rape as a problem for men. In this study, the authors explored mental health and medical professionals' responses and attitudes to male rape survivors.

Voluntary agencies should attempt to tackle 'secondary victimisation'[2] because research claims that such agencies tend to perpetrate it. For example, Washington (1999) suggests that male rape survivors experience secondary victimisation by informal and formal counselling services, and the medical profession. Washington's research, though, is based on interviews with six male survivors of sexual assault from adulthood and childhood. Therefore, her results cannot be generalised to all male survivors who undergo counselling services. Still, her results highlight that, because a small number of such survivors were suffering from voluntary agencies' responses and attitudes, the fact that some survivors were suffering warrants attention. This is particularly the case especially when Walker et al. (2005) found a link between male rape survivors' reluctance to seek psychological help from voluntary agencies and attempted suicide. Likewise, the survivors show high levels of health issues and psychological disturbances, even years after the rape (ibid.). Further, the researchers found that the survivors display anxiety, somatic symptoms, sleeplessness, depression, and social dysfunction, while lacking confidence pertaining to their social lives, appearance, and general competence; hence, the survivors' reluctance to seek psychological help from voluntary agencies. The male rape survivors who do seek help from such agencies will often present other reasons for attending, for example, medical advice, so as to conceal the rape itself (ibid.). However, because of the hidden nature of male rape, studies such as Walkler et al.*'s* have to use small sample groups, which means their results cannot be generalised.

In spite of criticisms, some attention is being directed towards male rape survivors. The impact of the legislative construction on policy includes male rape whereby the Stern Review (2010)[3] incorporates male rape survivors, stressing the need to incorporate the male in service provision, policy, and research. It is vital to note that voluntary agencies did not consider the Stern Review findings. For example, in official government responses to Stern (2010) and the following voluntary sector reports, the initial commentary pertaining to male rape was excluded, so the voluntary sector in the provision of services (as the government

[2] Secondary victimisation is the re-traumatisation of the rape survivor, abuse, or sexual assault. It is an indirect result of assault, which happens via the responses of institutions and individuals to the survivor when dealing with the survivor after the attack.

[3] The Stern Review (2010) is an independent review, directed by Baroness Stern, that investigates the treatment of rape complaints by local authorities, particularly looking at how such authorities deal with, and respond to survivors of rape.

directs and funds) for the male is small. An important conclusion drawn from the Stern Review (2010: 8) is that "the policies are not the problem. The failures are in the implementation." The review goes on to say that, "Whilst treatment of victims has improved considerably, we heard of areas where victims' organizations struggle to have their concerns heard". This may suggest a number of viewpoints, such as voluntary agencies may be expressing genuine concerns, but policy or law makers is refusing to adequately and whole-heartedly acknowledge them. The problems ingrained in the review may impact the way voluntary agencies respond to, and serve male rape survivors.

Similarly, the *Interim Government Response to the Stern Review* (Home Office 2010) largely neglects male rape, for example, in relation to risk management, protecting societies, and attrition. The focus is only on females as victims; males as offenders, which consequently ignores male rape survivors by not considering them as a priority:

> Government priorities in this important area are to: provide end-to-end support for all victims through the criminal justice system, from report to court; bring more offenders to justice by improving reporting and conviction rates; and rehabilitate offenders and manage the risk they present to *women* and *girls* (ibid.: 21. Emphasis added).

It appears that this passage completely neglects male rape survivors. As a consequence of this negligence, voluntary agencies that reach out to male rape survivors may have a suspicion about male rape survivors being excluded in state funding or government agendas. The voluntary agencies, then, may well disregard such survivors or see them as unimportant in comparison to female rape survivors, considering there is funding in place for female rape whilst it is also prevalent in government agendas. If men are not seen as survivors, arguably, they will not get the treatment needed and this will have an incidental affect on the survivor and their family and society. Cohen (2014) asserts that, by voluntary agencies, particularly rape crisis centres, neglecting male rape survivors, limited data on male rape is being produced while inhibiting data collection, which may possibly encourage voluntary agencies to see male rape as a low priority crime type and of little importance.

This section has critically discussed that voluntary agencies are possibly neglecting or excluding male rape survivors, which may contribute to the 'invisibility' of the male survivor (see Javaid 2014a, 2015d). In other words, male rape survivors have a lack of recognition and service provisions that are available (see also Javaid 2016). There is a considerable lack of empirical literature to direct voluntary agencies on effective interventions for male rape survivors. In addition, voluntary agencies evidently need training and support regarding male rape survivors. However, there is currently no requirement for voluntary agencies to improve, and most feminist-based rape crisis centres still do not provide services for male rape survivors (Cohen 2014). Despite this, the Government has committed £500,000 in the year 2014 to provide services, such as counselling and advice, to help male rape survivors, who previously have not been able to receive such support, and to encourage them to come forward after suffering such a crime

(Ministry of Justice 2014b). This fund will also support historic survivors who were under 13 at the time of the attack. However, many commentators argue that male rape survivors are not seen to be 'ideal' victims, which may influence the type of service delivery they receive, the attitudes from wider society, and the perpetuation of male rape myths.

The 'Ideal' Victim

The conception of male survivors' inability to seek help could potentially be exacerbated; if we critically examine the notion of what Christie (1986) describes as the 'ideal' victim, we can understand why the exacerbation may take place. His work has been useful for feminist theory and research. It is important to review his work to give an understanding of the responses to male rape survivors, and how male rape may be perceived in voluntary organisations for rape survivors. His work has elements of radical feminist theory and concurs with it. Christie's archetypal ideal victim is the 'little old lady' who, after having cared for her sick sister, gets robbed by a hooded and big drug addict in clear daylight. According to Christie, an 'ideal' victim has at least six characteristics:

- The victim is powerless and weak;
- The victim is carrying out a respectable project;
- The victim is traveling to somewhere that is beyond reproach;
- The offender dominates and controls the victim;
- The victim does not know the attacker; and
- The victim has enough influence to declare 'victim status'.

Without these characteristics, according to Christie, the victim is not an 'ideal' victim, so victimhood may be questioned. His work suggests that men cannot be raped and that women cannot execute sexual violence against other women, as he focuses solely on the offender as being a strong and powerful man who targets vulnerable and powerless young women. This resonates with MacKinnon's (1989) radical feminist approach, in that she argues that, for men, sexual violence against women is normalised and legitimated. There seems to be some overlap with Christie's suggestion of the rape victim being female and the offender as male, since Mackinnon implies that only men carry out sexual violence against women so as to perpetuate domination, power and control.

Although Christie points out men's violence against women, and although he highlights stranger rape that can happen, he suggests that this is the only form of rape and does not consider that others argue that acquaintance rape is more prevalent than stranger rape (e.g., Stermac et al. 1996; Isley and Gehrenbeck-Shim 1997; Walker et al. 2005; Lundrigan and Mueller-Johnson 2013). The arguments in Christie's work could possibly keep society misinformed, preventing male rape survivors from coming forward and from validating their experiences, particularly if they have been victims of acquaintance rape. Relatedly, his original article, wherein he introduced his theory, is not an empirically grounded article.

If a man alleges that he has been raped but others do not see him as a 'victim' per se, regardless of the appearance of physical, emotional or psychological pain, he may get no or less support by voluntary agencies since he may not fulfil the characteristics bullet-listed above. It is, therefore, important to consider practitioners' in voluntary agencies views on whom an 'ideal' victim is. This is because, for example, many men may experience date rape more so than stranger rape (Lundrigan and Mueller-Johnson 2013); but Christie suggests that a victim of stranger rape is a 'real' victim. Christie argues that, when the victim shows weakness, the easier the victim is given a victim status. However, some male rape survivors may conceal their emotions, fragility or psychological pain, so as to maintain their hegemonic masculinity (Abdullah-Khan 2008; Javaid 2014b, c, 2015b). Moreover, it could be argued that Christie's formulation of 'carrying out a respectable project' is prejudiced and vague. He discusses this phrase to mean that a woman is looking after her sick sister, while hanging around in a bar is not respectable.

However, it could be suggested that some rapists may seek their male victims at gay bars, so the gay scene may be a place where the rapists seek their victims. This is important to consider when some studies argue that gay men are particularly at risk of rape (e.g., Stermac et al. 1996; Lees 1997; Walker et al. 2005). This work on the 'ideal' victim also ignores religious and cultural factors, so it does not consider racism, sexism and biases that may influence people's judgements of, for instance, male rape victims who can come from different backgrounds. It is important to explore whether feminist-based rape crisis centres see men as 'ideal' victims.

Feminism and Male Rape: Is Male Rape a Feminist Issue?

Since the 1990s, criminology embraced feminist and sociological discourse on masculinity and crime; in turn, masculinity and victimisation (e.g., Newburn and Stanko 1995; Stanko 1990; Stanko and Hobdell 1993; Lees 1997). Most of this work was theoretically and conceptually based and adopted the literature surrounding hegemonic masculinity. Still, sexual violence was seen primarily as something that men commit to women, in that most feminist researchers and activists inexorably and intransigently framed sexual assault and rape solely as a "women's issue" for over 30 years (Cohen 2014). Indeed, sexual violence and rape have both been feminist issues for a very long time; however, it is important to closely dissect this to examine if feminism is truly fulfilling its aim of advocating gender equality. This could be problematic if rape crisis centers and feminists working in voluntary agencies hold social ideal views, such as 'men cannot be raped', when handling male rape survivors. That said, a number of authors argue that the publicity of female rape and some feminist literature facilitate the silence and isolation of male rape survivors by relegating discussions on male rape (Goodey 2005), leaving services for male survivors trailing twenty years behind that of female survivors (Davies 2002).

It has been argued that focusing on, and researching only women's victimisation is problematic, as by trying to put right the marginalisation and invisibility of

women's victimisation, little feminist research has considered men's victimisation (Owen 1995). Goodey (2005) argues that the lack of feminist research considering men's victimisation is because of two central points. Firstly, feminist researchers, like the rest of societies, operate on the assumption that women are expected to be vulnerable, fearful and passive, whist men are seen as aggressive, violent and fearless; secondly, whilst feminist writers highlight women's experiences of abuse and violence perpetrated by men, this incidentally sidelines or relegates discussions regarding men's victimisation.

Although Goodey does not give any explanations as to how these gender expectations are caused and does not offer suggestions of how to tackle such expectations, and although she only writes one page dedicated to men's victimisation in her 292-page monograph, she nonetheless points out the 'taboo' nature of male rape, where much feminist literature failed to do so at that time. This could be because, as Cohen (2014) argues, radical feminists highlight gender bias within discourse, in which they conceptualise particular conceptions of victimisation as inherently female: rape and sexual violence are examples of this conceptualisation. Therefore, arguably, it is vital to highlight male victimisation in victimology, wherein radical feminists have been, it could be argued, at the forefront of emphasising only female victimisation, in turn, possibly relegating or segregating male rape. This is supported by Cohen (2014), in which it is argued that radical feminism supports and promotes 'gender equality' yet is neglecting the study of male rape. As a result, she argues, radical feminism is becoming self-defeating and its primary aim of striving for 'gender equality' is seemingly tarnishing. It has similarly been argued that male rape is neither placed soundly and clearly in, broadly conceived, feminist theory and research nor in feminist activism (Abdullah-Khan 2008; Jamel 2010; Javaid 2014c). They also argue that radical feminism's negligence of male rape only functions to support, maintain, and reinforce patriarchal power relations and hegemonic masculinities; consequently, this process may be gendering sexual violence and rape while creating stereotypical gender norms.

This is consistent with other research that found that rape crisis counsellors, who work from a feminist perspective, subscribe to male rape myths, blaming victims of male rape for their crime if they do not make an active effort to fight off their assailant (Kassing and Prieto 2003). Their findings demonstrate that some of these male rape counsellors, both male and female, believe that male rape victims who show no resistance to their assailant should have done so because they are men and are expected to be action-oriented, tough, and aggressive. These gender role expectations of men perpetuated by these feminists could be deleterious in terms of the delivery of services being provided to male rape victims and could perpetuate negative stereotypes of male victims of rape. This argument based on blaming attitudes of rape victims could also be applicable when discussing female rape victims since they, too, may encounter 'blame the victim' types of attitudes when they report their assaults (Lees 2002), although such attitudes relating to female rape victims may not stem directly from feminists. Regarding the representativeness of the sample and the generalisibility of the information the data that Kassing and Prieto provide, it is important to note that they acquired an adequate sample size

(n = 183; 110 women and 73 men). Thus, their findings from this sample have a reasonable measure of generalisability to the general population of rape crisis counsellors, who work from a feminist perspective and who provide services for male rape victims.

Moreover, further evidence is supplied to support my argument. For instance, Walklate (2004) argues that some feminist research, both empirically and conceptually, contributes to the marginalisation of male victims. She further argues that some feminist research on sexual violence, which focuses solely on male violence against women, particularly sexual violence towards women, gives the suggestion that only women (and female children) can become victims of sexual violence—implicitly leaving us with the belief that men cannot be victims of sexual violence. Some feminist research, it is argued, takes the assumption that sexism is only applicable to females (Cohen 2014). According to Gelsthorpe (1989), this is an untenable assumption. The difficulty of getting valid research findings within the broad area of sexual violence makes it problematic to reach a firm conclusion on which results are an outcome of direct discrimination. As Walklate (2004) comments, it is vital to challenge any approach that attempts to essentialise the differences between females and males.

By following Walklate's suggestion, then, there is strong evidence to suggest that men can be, and very much are raped or sexually assaulted by *women*. For example, in Weiss's (2010) recent study, it was found that 46 % of men (n = 94) were sexually victimised by women. This contradicts and challenges cultural stereotypes about females being subordinate and passive, both sexually and physically, along with the idea that men are solely the offenders of sexual crimes. It is important to consider whether voluntary agencies believe that women can rape men since research in this area is almost non-existent in the UK. Weiss further alerts us to the fact that men are sexually victimised by attempted forced sex, actual forced sex, and other sex-related incidents a lot more commonly, even though rape is frequently identified as a 'crime against women' in societies. In English law, rape can be experienced by both men and women, but only men can legally rape (Javaid 2014d). It has been argued that, by women not having a penis, they are perceived in law and in societies to be unable to rape men, resulting in the view, which becomes normalised and unchallenged, that only men can rape women (Walklate 2004). For example, radical feminist MacKinnon writes that:

> Battery as violence denies its sex-specific nature. I think that it is done sexually to women. Not only in where it is done—over half the incidents are in the bedroom, or in respect of the surrounding events—the precipitating sexual jealousy (1989: 92).

This argument shows that she is trying to re-establish the sexual aspect to violence—MacKinnon argues that, by simplistically talking about violence, conceals this. However, stressing sexual violent behaviour, as such, illustrates usual types of heterosexual experience as its relative measure and, simultaneously, does not put into context the violent behavior as part of the extensive range of men's experiences and violences. Therefore, her argument refutes recognition of the possibility that men can become victims. Mackinnon implies that sexual violence is

perpetrated only against women, leaving male victims of sexual violence out of the equation; and this can cause problems of managing the associated expectations of hegemonic masculinity (Javaid 2014c, 2015b, 2016). It could be argued that Mackinnon is uncritically basing her argument on sexist assumptions. This can also be seen in the work of radical feminist Dworkin (1981), where she argues that individual men control women first and that this is then legitimated and reinforced by the patriarchal state in its failure to conceptualise sexual violence as 'real crime'. This radical feminist approach suggests that women cannot perpetrate sexual violence, and, as a result, for violence in general. However, there is some evidence to support that women do rape men (e.g., Sarrel and Masters 1982; Johnson and Shrier 1987; Anderson and Struckman-Johnson 1998; Fiebert and Tucci 1998; Oliver 2007; Abdullah-Khan 2008; Duncan 2010; Weiss 2010). Walklate (2004) argues that radical feminism for a very long time disregarded that lesbian and heterosexual women could commit violence. In short, it could be argued that radical feminism's theory being fundamentally based on reductionism and essentialism indicates serious weaknesses.

Despite radical feminism lacking inclusivity of male rape, socialist feminism is the most understanding and accepting of the issue of male rape, taking on a 'double vision' on crime, implying that both gender relations and class shape crime. Messerschmidt (1993) argues that this double vision of socialist feminism attempted to give a different structural account of crimes that the powerless and powerful, men and women, commit. Thus, socialist feminism formulates two explicit contributions to the issue of male rape. First, socialist feminism is able to recognise the issue that women can also commit crime; although this is not made clear, at least socialist feminism is able to consider the notion. Second, socialist feminism recognises two basic groups in patriarchal capitalist societies: a powerful group comprising some men and the capitalist class, and a powerless group made up of women and the working classes. Therefore, Barrett (1980) argues that a more inclusive feminism is needed, asserting that:

> Feminism seeks to change not simply men or women, or both … but seeks to change the relationship between them. Although the basis of this will be provided by an autonomous women's liberation movement, the strategy must involve political engagement with men rather than a policy of absolute separatism. Socialist men, like other men, stand to lose political power and social privilege from the liberation of women but, more than other men, they have shown now and in the past some political intention to support feminist struggle … Just as we cannot conceive of women's liberation under the oppression of capitalism so we cannot conceive of a socialism whose principles of equality, freedom and dignity are vitiated by the familiar iniquities of gender (p. 112).

Unlike radical feminism, socialist feminism observes that men can be a part of the powerless group, giving room for the acknowledgement of male rape victims or male victimisation more generally. This is a point that radical feminism still struggles with in contemporary society. This, consequently, leads others to argue that the majority of feminists are negatively comparing and contrasting male rape

with female rape, which results in supposed evidence to support same as/more than/less than statements (Cohen 2014). This is evidenced in Brownmiller's (1975) text, in which she asserts that male survivors are not neglected or actively 'forgotten'; instead, female survivors replace male survivors who she argues are *more* 'acceptable'. Cohen (2014) argues that comparing and contrasting male rape with female rape is deleterious in its ramifications in terms of fuelling continued polarisation of debate and in trying to conceptualise harm. There is a lack of research on whether voluntary agencies are negatively or positively comparing and contrasting male rape with female rape in the UK. Research in this area is needed since some feminist approaches are rendering male rape invisible, it could be argued, because of the irreconcilability of men's sexual victimisation with the existing feminist paradigm that is based on reductionism and essentialism. This could be problematic when conceptualising men's sexual victimisation in contrast to women's, particularly in pertinent to measures of 'harm'. For example, articulating male rape as 'less than/more than' serious in comparison to female rape. In addition, such conceptualisation could influence recording, prosecution and reporting practices.

Meanwhile, many authors (excluding Abdullah-Khan 2008; Cohen 2014) are reluctant to 'blame feminism' for the negligence of male rape. In addition, authors typically place male rape in conventional frames rather than theorising male rape as a subject in its own right (for example, Groth and Burgess 1980; Stermac et al. 1996; Hodge and Canter 1998), which Cohen (2014) believes results in the subject of male rape 'stymieing.' In attempting to tackle this stymieing, very few studies argue that radical feminism invisibilises male rape (e.g., Davies 2002; Abdullah-Khan 2008; Cohen 2014; Javaid 2014a, b, c, d). Such research urgently calls for radical feminism to consider male rape because it seeks gender equality and is useful at explaining and understanding rape, and because some voluntary agencies employ feminists who provide services for male rape survivors, while some rape crisis centers reach out to male survivors of rape. For example, Barnsley Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Services, and Kirklees Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre. However, many male rape survivors may be reluctant to expose themselves to societies as victims of a crime seen solely to affect the female population, and many of the survivors may not want to experience the negative reactions associated with male rape (Javaid 2015c).

Other writers in the field of male rape also argue that some feminist approaches are neglecting male rape. This includes Donnelly and Kenyon (1996), who argue that feminists have considered rape as a women's issue since the 1970s; thus, it may be very challenging for feminist support provisions to provide recognition of, and access to male rape survivors. They found that many feminists who worked at voluntary agencies and rape crisis centers perpetuated the beliefs that men cannot be victims of rape, male rape is quite rare and so it is not an issue, and that male victims want to be raped. Similarly, Mezey and King (2000) observe that the extensively dispersed statement that 'rape is a feminist issue' creates negligence of male rape. Therefore, it could be argued that some feminist-based rape crisis centers and feminists running voluntary agency service provisions may be overlooking or neglecting male rape survivors. This requires further research to see whether

contemporary findings support Mezey and King's and Donnelly and Kenyon's arguments. For many feminists in these voluntary agencies, male rape is just another aspect of men's violence against women:

> Rape law sets the boundaries within which it is acceptable for men to have sex. It is about men's not women's sexuality: men act, women are acted upon; men force, women succumb; men are the subjects, women are the objects. This is the case even where both the parties involved are men; as has frequently been observed, the raped man is culturally feminised by the act of rape (AHRC 2006).

This passage suggests that men's experiences and needs get overlooked, as their victimisation is reconfigured to something relating to male dominance of women, implying that male rape offenders regard their male rape victims as subordinate, weak 'women', so showing intrinsic issues of power over women. Of course, the reality is that male rape victims, and men who are survivors of crime in general, remain as *men*. As a result, it is important to think about how voluntary agencies, then, ought to serve male rape survivors. It has been argued that, by concentrating on men's experiences *as men*, the marginalisation of women's experiences can be prevented (Owen 1995). Pitfield (2013) found that one male rape victim in her sample of 6 male rape victims was suicidal on the day he went to seek help from a feminist-based rape crisis centre—but they refused to help him. He says: "I was *suicidal* that day and … they [rape crisis centre] told me the service is for women only, very … non-sympathetic … very … blunt" (ibid.: 66. Emphasis added). Pitfield adds that, for this survivor, the rape crisis centre invalidated his feeling of being suicidal and his identity as a rape victim simply because he was a man. Similarly, Jamel (2010) argues that male rape survivors feel alienated in society by the lack of public awareness of male rape and the lack of information about relevant victim resources for male rape survivors, due to the publicity surrounding rape crisis services for female rape victims only.

It is further suggested that rape crisis centres already providing help for women could include men as well (Walker 2004). Although this is slowly occurring, with more rape crisis centres providing assistance for male rape survivors, it appears that they traditionally see men as attackers instead of potential victims. It is important to explore this in future empirical research to consider whether feminists providing service delivery to male rape survivors impede the quality of service delivery. Feminist theory and research, however, has provided robust explanations for female and male rape, in that men rape women and other men as a way in which to exercise domination, power and control (Stanko 1990).

Feminist Theory and Rape: Explaining Male Sexual Victimisation

The 'feminist movement' has been concerned with explaining rape since the late 1960s. The 'feminist movement' that emerged in the 1960s is usually referred to as 'second wave feminism', to differentiate it from earlier 'feminist movements' in the UK in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The earlier 'feminist

movement' was concerned with abuse and sexual violence, and many of the problems on which they campaigned, such as the electoral reform and status of married women, were intimately connected to the issues that would concern the 'second wave feminism' (for a detailed discussion of the history of feminism, see Walklate 2004). During the 1960s, feminists challenged the widely held assumption that offenders of rape were pathological men who have uncontrollable sexual desires and 'lust'. In the twentieth century, many theories rested on the belief that the act of rape was consequential of the offender's pathology. Most theories argued that rape was a perversion and was predominately motivated by sexual needs, and that offenders of rape were mentally ill (e.g., Amir 1971). These theories were suggesting that rape offenders could not control their sexual urges or impulses, so they rape. Arguably, this suggests that rape survivors lead the offenders on or provoke the rape by dressing in a particular way; therefore, the blame may be transferred from the offender to the survivor (Abdullah-Khan 2008). Russell (1984) argues that, although it is possible that such rapists may exist, most rapists do not fit the criteria for a psychiatric disorder. However, this is inconsistent with Felson's (2002) positivistic-based argument; he argues that male to female rape is sexually motivated since rape victims tend to be young, attractive women. He goes so far as to argue that this same pattern is apparent in the rape of male victims (see Felson and Krohn 1990). This is supported by Lockwood (1980), in which it was found that most male victims of rape in prison were young, attractive males.

However, Stanko (1990) strongly challenges such positivistic-based ideology. She, instead, argues that rape is essentially an act of violence rather than a means to gain sexual gratification. According to Lees (1997), rape allows the offender to execute power and control against the victim whether the victim is female or male. It is argued that, in societies still structured around male supremacy, the most predominant hegemonic masculine stereotype continues to support the notion that 'real men' control and dominate (Connell 2005). Rape, arguably, is one way of achieving this domination and control (Stanko 1990). This is also evident in older feminist research, in which Brownmiller (1975) applies the dominant ideology of patriarchy to male rape. She explains the act of male rape as,

> … the need of some men to prove their mastery through physical and sexual assault, and to establish most strikingly within the special crucible of the male-violent, a coercive hierarchy of the strong on top of the weak (p. 267).

Others, however, argue that sexual assault and rape appear to serve both the function of sexual gratification and power (e.g., Jones 2000). This notion of power and control stems predominately from radical feminism. Abdullah-Khan (2008) argues that, by radical feminists approaching rape as a gender-specific crime, in that women are the victims of rape, not men, perpetuates the idea that men raping women is a means to sustain the patriarchal power structure. Rape, according to radical feminism, maintains social control and order, keeping women subordinated, subjugated, powerless and inferior. Although this feminist paradigm could help to explain and understand male rape, in that it is a means to preserve power and dominance, as is similar to female rape, it suggests that women cannot be offenders of sexual violence, only men can be. Further evidence indicates that offenders of

male rape have a new form of power that they can use against male rape victims, that of the threat by the offender of HIV transmission:

> A man who rapes another man and conveys the possibility of HIV transmission gains power and control over his victim not only from the immediacy of the physical violence, but also the assurance and confidence that such a threat will provide ongoing fear, dread and uncertainty (Scarce 1997: 155).

However, it has been argued that, as is the case with female rape, men rape other men for a multitude of reasons, which is likely to vary depending on the type of relationship between the victim and offender (Lees 1997). It appears that male survivors of rape are expected to be invulnerable, powerful, domineering and strong. For example, Stanko (1990: 109) writes that, "… for men, there are no tips about personal safety in crime prevention handbooks. It is assumed that men either know about avoiding dimly-lit alley ways and bus stops, or they are able to protect themselves." Stanko and Hobdell (1993) argue that men see their victimisation through a 'male frame', and, because the word 'victim' has negative connotations of helplessness and weakness, which challenge men's sense of invulnerability and the dominant ideology of patriarchy, inhibits men's recovery process and the reporting of their crime. They go on to argue that men who are victims conceal their emotions to perpetuate their sense of self-reliance, self-esteem, and masculinity, resulting in the exacerbation of their isolation and inability to seek help. The reasons why men are reluctant to report rape are underdeveloped in contrast to research pertaining to rape of women. It is vital that research considers the various reasons why men may be reluctant to report rape to voluntary agencies, although some attempt is being made to explore this (see Javaid 2016).

Conclusion

To get a better understanding of male rape, this paper critically reviewed voluntary agencies that provide support for male rape survivors, and feminist theory and research, by carefully selecting and synthesising all the relevant research evidence. This systematic reviewing enabled me to evaluate and synthesise evidence and literature relating to the third sector and feminist theory in a rigorous and transparent fashion to increase the validity and reliability of my argument. This paper suggests that, through the neglect of male rape, the gender roles of men and women are reinforced instead of being tackled. The argument of this paper was that some feminist research continues to overlook the fact that men are rape survivors, too. Many voluntary agencies employ feminists with feminist beliefs, while many voluntary agencies are feminist based, such as rape crisis centres, so it was important to fill a gap in this area. In doing so, it helped to give an understanding of voluntary agencies' attitudes and responses to male rape. In this paper, it was argued that radical feminism's negligence of male rape functions to support, maintain, and reinforce patriarchal power relations and hegemonic masculinities, whereas socialist feminism is more accepting of male rape survivors and not all voluntary agencies

are negligent of male rape. However, it could be emphasised that removing the topic of male rape from discussions of sexual violence enables the preservation of the orthodox feminist model, in which women are seen to be solely as rape survivors; men, as rapists. Consequently, feminist practice, research, and theory are gaining some criticism from some writers for firmly holding on to gendered norms. It was argued that more attention be paid to the experiences and needs of male rape survivors without neglecting female rape survivors. It could be put forward that it is possible in all rape crisis centres to offer a separate area for men, as is the practice of Birmingham rape crisis centre, so neither sex would feel threatened by the other's presence. It was also argued that we ought to conceptualise male rape as an act of power and control, rather than seeing it as either a gendered phenomenon or an act that is sexualised; in other words, we need to look at the act, not the person.

Acknowledgments My humble thanks go to the anonymous reviewers for their important, valuable and inspiring feedback of the draft manuscript. Thank you.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest This theoretical and conceptual paper was not funded. The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

Human and animal rights statement This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by the author.

References

Abdullah-Khan, N. (2008). *Male rape: The emergence of a social and legal issue*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

AHRC, Research Centre for Law, Gender and Sexuality. (2006). *Response to the Office for Criminal Justice Reform's Consultation Paper: 'Convicting Rapists and Protecting Survivors of Rape—Justice for Survivors of Rape*.' Retrieve at http://www.kent.ac.uk/clgs/news-and-events/consultation_responses.html.

Amir, M. (1971). *Patterns in forcible rape*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anderson, I., & Struckman-Johnson, C. (Eds.). (1998). *Sexually aggressive women: Current perspectives and controversies*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Barrett, M. (1980). Women's oppression today: Problems in Marxist feminist analysis. In M. Humm (Ed.), *Feminisms: A reader*. Harvester: Hertfordshire.

Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women and rape*. London: Penguin.

Carpenter, S. (2009). *The psychological effects of male rape*. [Online]. Retrieve at http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/counselloradvice9907.html. Accessed on 09 June 2014.

Christie, N. (1986). The ideal victim. In E. A. Fattah (Ed.), *From crime policy to victim policy* (pp. 17–30). Basingstoke: MacMillan.

Cohen, C. (2014). *Male rape is a feminist issue: Feminism, governmentality, and male rape*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Davies, M. (2002). Male sexual assault victims: A selective review of the literature and implications for support services. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 7*, 203–214.

Donnelly, D., & Kenyon, S. (1996). "Honey we don't do men": Gender stereotypes and the provision of services to sexually assaulted males. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*(3), 441–448.

Duncan, K. (2010). *Female sexual predators: Understanding them to protect our children and youths*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishers.

Dworkin, A. (1981). *Pornography: Men possessing women*. London: Women's Press.

Felson, R. B. (2002). *Violence and gender re-examined*. Washington, DC: APA.
Felson, R. B., & Krohn, M. (1990). Motives for rape. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 7*, 222–242.
Fiebert, M. S., & Tucci, L. M. (1998). Sexual coercion: Men victimized by women. *Journal of Men's Studies, 6*(2), 127–133.
Gelsthorpe, L. (1989). *Sexism and the female offender*. Aldershot: Gower.
Goodey, J. (2005). *Victims and victimology: Research, policy and practice*. Harlow: Longman.
Groth, A. N., & Burgess, A. W. (1980). Male rape: Offenders and victims. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 137*(7), 806–810.
Hodge, S., & Canter, D. (1998). Victims and perpetrators of male sexual assault. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 13*(2), 222–239.
Home Office. (2010). *Interim government response to the stern review*. London: Government Equalities Office, Home Office. Retrieved from http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100418065537/http://equalities.gov.uk/pdf/Response_to_Stern_finalWeb.pdf. Accessed 29 June 2014.
Isley, P. J., & Gehrenbeck-Shim, D. (1997). Sexual assault of men in the community. *Journal of Community Psychology, 25*(2), 159–166.
Jamel, J. (2010). Researching the provision of service to rape victims by specially trained police officers: The influence of gender—An exploratory study. *New Criminal Law Review: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal, 13*(4), 688–709.
Javaid, A. (2014a). Male rape: The 'invisible' male. *Internet Journal of Criminology*, pp. 1–49. Retrieved from http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com/Javaid_Male_Rape_The_Invisible_Male_IJC_Jan_2014.pdf.
Javaid, A. (2014b) Male rape: The unseen world of male rape. *Internet Journal of Criminology*, pp. 1–42. Retrieved from http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com/Javaid_The_Unseen_World_of_Male_Rape_IJC_Jan_2014.pdf.
Javaid, A. (2014c). Feminism, masculinity, and male rape: Bringing male rape 'out of the closet'. *Journal of Gender Studies*. doi:10.1080/09589236.2014.959479.
Javaid, A. (2014d). Male rape in law and the courtroom. *Web Journal of Current Legal Issues, 20*(2). Available at: http://webjcli.org/article/view/340/434.
Javaid, A. (2015a). The role of alcohol in intimate partner violence: Causal behaviour or excusing behaviour? *British Journal of Community Justice, 13*(1), 75–92.
Javaid, A. (2015b). The dark side of men: The nature of masculinity and its uneasy relationship with male rape. *Journal of Men's Studies, 23*(3), 271–292.
Javaid, A. (2015c). Police responses to, and attitudes towards, male rape: Issues and concerns. *International Journal of Police Science and Management, 17*(2), 1–10.
Javaid, A. (2015d). Male rape myths: Understanding and explaining social attitudes surrounding male rape. *Masculinities and Social Change, 4*(3), 270–294.
Javaid, A. (2016). Male rape, stereotypes, and unmet needs: Hindering recovery, perpetuating silence. *Violence and Gender, 3*(1), 7–13.
Johnson, R. L., & Shrier, D. (1987). Post-sexual victimization by females of male patients in an adolescent medicine clinic population. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 144*(5), 650–652.
Jones, I. (2000). Cultural and historical aspects of male sexual assault. In G. Mezey & M. King (Eds.), *Male victims of sexual assault* (pp. 104–115). United States: Oxford University Press.
Kassing, L. R., & Prieto, L. R. (2003). The rape myth and blame-based beliefs of counselors-in-training toward male victims of rape. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 81*, 455–461.
King, M. (1995). Sexual assaults on men: Assessment and management. *British Journal of Hospital Medicine, 53*(6), 245–246.
Koss, M., & Harvey, M. (1987). *The rape victim: Clinical and community approaches to treatment*. Lexington MA: Stephen Green.
Lees, S. (1997). *Ruling passions. Sexual violence, reputation and the law*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Lees, S. (2002). *Carnal knowledge. Rape on trial*. London: The Women's Press Ltd.
Lockwood, D. (1980). *Prison sexual violence*. New York: Elsevier North-Holland.
Lundrigan, S., & Mueller-Johnson, K. (2013). Male stranger rape: A behavioral model of survivor–offender interaction. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 40*(7), 763–783.
MacKinnon, C. (1989). *Feminism unmodified*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Messerschmidt, J. (1993). *Masculinities and crime: Critique and reconceptualization of theory*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Mezey, G. C., & King, M. B. (2000). *Male victims of sexual assault*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Ministry of Justice. (2014a). *New support for male rape and sexual violence victims*. London: HMSO.
Ministry of Justice. (2014b). *£500,000 to help break the silence for male rape victims*. London: HMSO.
Monk-Turner, E., & Light, D. (2010). Male sexual assault and rape: Who seeks counselling? *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 22*(3), 255–265.
Newburn, T., & Stanko, E. (1995). When men are victims: The failure of victimology. In T. Newburn & E. Stanko (Eds.), *Just boys doing business: Men, masculinities and crime* (pp. 153–165). London: Routledge.
Oliver, B. E. (2007). Preventing female-perpetrated sexual abuse. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse, 8*(1), 19–32.
Owen, J. (1995). Women-talk and men-talk: Defining and resisting victim status. In R. E. Dobash, R. P. Dobash, & L. Noaks (Eds.), *Just boys doing business: Men, masculinities and crime* (pp. 46–68). London: Routledge.
Pitfield, C. (2013). *Male survivors of sexual assault: To tell or not to tell?* PhD thesis. Retrieved from http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:BBMfwrMnd34J:roar.uel.ac.uk/3442/1/2013_DClinPsych_Pitfield.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk&client=safari.
Rentoul, L., & Appleboom, N. (1997). Understanding the psychological impact of rape and serious sexual assault of men: A literature review. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, 4*(4), 267–274.
Russell, D. I. (1984). *Sexual exploitations*. USA: Sage.
Sarrel, P. M., & Masters, W. H. (1982). Sexual molestation of men by women. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour, 11*(2), 117–131.
Scarce, M. (1997). *Male on male rape: The hidden toll of stigma and shame*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.
Sepler, F. (1990). Victim advocacy and young male victims of sexual abuse: An evolutionary model. In M. Hunter (Ed.), *The sexually abused male, Vol. 1: Prevalence, impact, and treatment* (pp. 73–85). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
Stanko, E. (1990). *Everyday violence*. London: Virago.
Stanko, E. A., & Hobdell, K. (1993). Assaults on men: Masculinity and male violence. *British Journal of Criminology, 33*(3), 400–415.
Stermac, L., Sheridan, P. M., Davidson, A., & Dunn, S. (1996). Sexual assault of adult males. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*(1), 52–65.
Stern, V. (2010). *The stern review*. London: Government Equalities Office, Home Office. Retrieved from http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100418065537/http://equalities.gov.uk/PDF/Stern_Review_acc_FINAL.pdf. Accessed 26 June 2014.
Vearnals, S., & Campbell, T. (2001). Male victims of male sexual assault: A review of psychological consequences and treatment. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy, 16*(3), 279–286.
Walker, J. (2004). *A study of male rape survivors*. PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire.
Walker, J., Archer, J., & Davies, M. (2005). Effects of rape on men: A descriptive analysis. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 34*(1), 69–80.
Walklate, S. (2004). *Gender, crime and criminal justice* (2nd ed.). USA and Canada: Willan Publishing.
Washington, P. (1999). Second assault of male survivors of sexual violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14*(7), 713–730.
Weiss, K. G. (2010). Male sexual victimisation: Examining men's experiences of rape and sexual assault. *Men and Masculinities, 12*(3), 275–298.